

**Review of the
"Copping On" Crime Awareness Initiative**

**Matt Bowden
July 1998**



**The Children's Research Centre
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks all who contributed to this report. Special thanks are due the Youthreach staff and Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers who agreed to be interviewed. Also, it would not have been possible to get to the core of the issues without the contribution of the Youthreach participants who were involved in group discussions. The *Copping On* Steering Committee members - Dermot Stokes, Noel Dalton, Joe Kiernan, and Garrett Byrne are to be thanked sincerely for sharing their views and insights in interviews and for their comments on the draft. Sincere thanks also to Ms. Margaret Kelly, ESF Section of the Department of Education and Science who commissioned this review. Also thanks to Superintendent Patrick J. McGowan, Director of the Garda National Juvenile Office and to Inspector Joe Delaney of the same office for their co-operation. Marian Quinn, the *Copping On* Co-ordinator gave essential back up and access to all the documentation and information necessary for the review. Thanks to Owen Metcalfe, Chief Education Officer of the Department of Health who provided some useful background insights into health promotion and education. Finally, colleagues Barry Cullen, Robbie Gilligan and Sheila Greene of the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin supported this work and provided much needed criticism and encouragement.

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July 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the *Copping On* Youthreach Crime Awareness Initiative was conducted by the Children's Research Centre Trinity College Dublin, commissioned by the European Social Fund (ESF) section of the Department of Education and Science. The fieldwork for the review was conducted during the period October to December 1997 and involved interviews with those involved in the *Copping On* Steering Committee, with Youthreach staff, with Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) and Youthreach participants.

The *Copping On* Initiative developed from practice workshops held at the Youthreach centre at Leixlip, County Kildare. A national Steering Committee was established later that year to expand it to a national programme and involving the Youthreach National Co-ordinator, the Garda National Juvenile Office, the Department/of Justice Prison Education Service and County Kildare Vocational Education Committee.

This report reviews the operation of the *Copping On* Initiative. It contextualises the initiative in relation to the Youthreach Programme, the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme and the development of cross-departmental co-operation. It also outlines how the crime awareness initiative was developed and implemented, and reflects and comments on the relevance and value of the resource materials, and the satisfaction of people involved.

This review concludes that:

- Youthreach participants report positively on their experiences of the programme;
- the resource pack has been a useful tool to those who have used it with groups and those who were planning group sessions from it;
- the level of involvement of Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) in implementing the programme is varied but individual JLOs report positively on their experiences with the resource pack and training programme;
- the Steering Committee delivered effectively on all of its objectives;
- the inter-agency dimension has been a key element in this effectiveness;
- the *Copping On* programme is a response to the need expressed by Youthreach centres around the country that the issue of offending and attitudes to it be addressed;

- the programme is being widely used in Youthreach centres, even though there are some issues to be dealt with in relation to its implementation;
- the *Copping On* programme is consistent with the objectives of Youthreach in that it encourages *exploration* of offending by young people and helps them to understand the complex, and often competing, discourses in relation to crime;
- the programme seems to produce greater awareness of the consequences of offending but whether it has a net effect in terms of reducing or preventing actual offending is a more complex question and perhaps the subject for more substantial follow-up research;
- there is a slight lack of clarity in terms of the targets of the programme and whether it should be applied to all trainees or only to those who have particular behaviours;
- there are unresolved structural or systemic issues in Youthreach which may have an impact on how this and other programmes are implemented effectively.

The report recommends:

- enhancement of the development framework from which *Copping On* has emerged;
- further consideration of the role of JLOs in the light of their experiences with *Copping On* and especially in relation to the need for training in lifeskills and developmental groupwork;
- expansion of Garda involvement to include other officers especially those involved in community policing;
- that consideration be given to incorporating a crime awareness dimension in existing health and social education programmes;
- development of the inter-agency dimension of the programme through capacity building measures at local and regional level;
- expansion of the staffing of *Copping On*.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview and Scope of the Review

The *Copping On*¹ Youthreach Crime Awareness Initiative was developed from ideas generated by Youthreach centre staff at Leixlip during 1995 and 1996. Further development of the Programme took place during 1996 and 1997. Led by an inter-agency Steering Committee, the Initiative was transferred from the local to a national context with the aid of funding from the Department of Education and Science and the European Social Fund (ESF). There are two distinct dimensions to the programme:

- (i) a resource pack for Youthreach personnel which sets awareness of crime in a youth lifeskills context;
- (ii) a two day in-service training programme targeted at Youthreach personnel and Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers, and specifically focused upon utilising the resource pack.

A part-time Co-ordinator was seconded from the Kildare Vocational Education Committee (VEC) in September 1996 who developed the resource materials and organised and facilitated the residential training sessions. A total of ten residential sessions were held during 1997 and were attended by approximately 130 people from Youthreach, Community Training Workshops and Garda Juvenile Liaison staff.

This review report explores the *Copping On* programme as a multi agency project in creating crime awareness amongst early school leavers within the Youthreach Programme and as a training programme for Youthreach and Garda Juvenile Liaison personnel. As such, this report is not intended to be an evaluation of either Youthreach¹ or the Juvenile Diversion Programme. It discusses the impact of the training, the extent to which it has been utilised and the satisfaction of the actors with the materials at local level. The review also assesses the effectiveness of the inter-agency framework against the backdrop of the shift towards strategic management within the public sector. The review concludes by drawing together a range of relevant key issues which arise from the experience of implementing the *Copping On* Programme.

The fieldwork for the review was conducted between October and December 1997. A draft report was circulated to the various stakeholders in January 1998. During this

¹ The term "*Copping On*" or 'cop on' is a colloquialism which is typically used as a means of instructing a person to come to their senses or to act in a way that is expected of them.

time the programme has taken new directions and the Steering Committee has expanded to include a broader range of agencies. Much of the content of the report is based on developments and issues in the programme up to October 1997.

This first section of the report outlines the terms of reference for the review, the evaluation questions which arise, the review methodology and the process for selecting informants. Section two is designed to contextualise *Copping On* within its development framework and is aimed at readers not familiar with either Youthreach or the Juvenile Diversion Programme. This section also contextualises *Copping On* against the backdrop of health, social and personal education more generally. Section three describes how *Copping On* was developed and how the structures for supporting it were formed. It also identifies issues and questions which arise in this context. Section four examines the resource materials and identifies the issues involved for Youthreach staff and JLOs in implementing the *Copping On* initiative in their own settings. It draws upon interviews with Youthreach participants to help identify the meaning which *Copping On* has for them. Sections three and four together constitute the core of this document. The report concludes by summarising key findings and discussing their implications (sections five and six respectively).

1.2 Terms of Reference

The Department of Education and Science (ESF Section) commissioned the Children's Research Centre Trinity College Dublin² to undertake a review / evaluation of *Copping On* with the following terms of reference:

"Having regard to the overall aims and objectives of Youthreach, to review and report on

- (a) the extent to which the *Copping On* programme has met its own objectives within the wider objectives of Youthreach;
- (b) the relevance and value of the resource materials developed for the programme;
- (c) the appropriateness of the structures for inter-agency co-operation on the programme, together with recommendations for any changes in this area in the light of an expansion of the programme;

² See Appendix 1.

- (d) the levels of satisfaction of participants on the programme: trainees, Youthreach staff, steering group, JLO staff, Prison staff, Health Promotion Unit etc.;
- (e) the views of the evaluator on the appropriateness, relevance and potential for mainstreaming the *Copping On* initiative within the wider education and training sphere, and the issues which arise in that context;
- (f) a comparison, based on a literature review, of the approach in this programme and the substance abuse prevention programme, and recommendations as to role and further development of the *Copping On* programme within the wider framework of Social, Personal and Health Education" (Source: Department of Education and Science, terms of reference, 1997).

<*

The terms of reference set the framework for the questions raised and the mode of enquiry. In relation to (a) it is crucial to approach this report from an understanding of the role and structure of Youthreach and where its objectives fit in terms of dealing with the problem of early school leaving.

In relation to (b) above, one indicator of the *relevance* of the *Copping On* programme is the extent to which practitioners use the materials in their work and whether they continue to use the materials with groups of young people. This also assumes that the young people involved give sufficiently positive feedback on the sessions from the pack. The decision to use or not use the materials might well be based on whether there is adequate support from the centre Co-ordinator or other staff, whether there are sufficient hours available, whether there is physical space to conduct group exercises. Arising from this it is necessary to establish the issues in relation to *transferring* new ideas or insights from the training programme into its actual use in centres.

Indicators of *value* from a qualitative perspective could in this instance be the way in which the staff use the materials; whether they get positive feedback; whether staff are able to organise a session without reinterpreting the materials; or other functions which the resource materials serve that the staff see as valuable to them. A measure of value could be whether Youthreach staff or JLOs can see the potential for the resource materials to be used in such a way as to contribute to tackling the problem of offending within the communities in which the participants live. Overall, both value and relevance are linked to (d) above in relation to the level of satisfaction with the programme amongst the various participants.

The views of JLOs as to the relevance and value of the materials depend to some extent on the role they play in using the pack. As such the review sets out to establish the type of involvement they have and the issues which arise from this.

In relation to (c) the inter-agency component of *Copping On*, the review describes how the existing structures came about (section 3 below), the evolving framework for cross-departmental co-operation and analyses the development of *Copping On* in that context.

In relation to (e) above the review sets out to consider the potential for mainstreaming arising from relevant studies of similar programmes. In regard to (f) the review makes some comment on the position of *Copping On* in relation to personal, health and social education generally and refers to appropriate literature. Unfortunately, there is little written evaluation of lifeskills programmes in Ireland and few relevant outcome studies internationally given that the deployment of such programmes is relatively recent. Moreover, while comparisons with other programmes are useful in so far as they give some idea of the general lessons from issues arising from their implementation, it might not be fair to *Copping On*, given that it originated in and developed to deal with, a particular setting or context.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

This review is an assessment of the issues arising from a training programme and a related pack of resource materials. It does not seek to identify attitudinal or behavioural changes amongst participants in lifeskills sessions. Outcome evaluation is typically prospective and longitudinal requiring some follow-up of participants and a selected 'control' group.

The choice of methodology for this review has been largely determined by

- the objectives set for the review by the commissioning body (as in section 1.2 above), i.e. the tools required are those which assist the development of a formative, as opposed to summative evaluation.
- the timeframe set by the commissioning body and the speed at which research resources could be mobilised by the Children's Research Centre;
- the fact that the *Copping On* programme has already been delivered and as such the review draws upon retrospective accounts by informants of how the programme was both planned and implemented.

It is perhaps more relevant and appropriate to refer to this exercise as a *review* or a *retrospective formative evaluation*. This type of evaluation is applicable to situations where there is the possibility of making changes for improvement in the programme. **Thus in** formative evaluation, revisions may be possible in staffing, organisation, materials development and policy making (Herman, 1987: 16). The extent to which changes are made to the programme is of course dependent upon the willingness of the stakeholders involved to incorporate the report's recommendations. The purpose of the review is then to *identify issues* which may *inform* programme development and evaluation in the future. Thus the review process draws upon a wide range of sources including reference to relevant empirical research, policy documentation and other evaluation reports. The aim of this approach is to contextualise the *Copping On* initiative within a systemic framework, i.e. that it is within a broader set of relationships: with the education and training systems, public policy generally and current ideas / concepts about crime.

In gathering interview data, informants were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- that particular personnel were specified for consultation, as in terms of reference;
- the extent to which one could identify sites where the Youthreach centre fitted a number of specific sub-criteria which would then allow for a *balanced* selection in terms of:
 - (a) their geographical location;
 - (b) implementation status - i.e. whether after receiving training from *Copping On* staff were
 - * now utilising programme materials with their participant group,
 - * planning to use it on their own or in conjunction with the Garda JLO and / or other agencies,
 - * and not using it and / or not planning to use it;
 - (c) status and position within their Youthreach setting, i.e. whether the person trained was a Youthreach Co-ordinator or not.

The researcher telephoned a total of 63 Youthreach or Community Training Workshop sites where a member of staff had participated in the *Copping On* training programme to ascertain their implementation status. In all instances the researcher sought a response from the named member of staff who undertook the training. A response was obtained

from staff at thirty sites. Using a database the evaluator sorted these by the three criteria above. The first site on each computer generated sort matching the criteria was contacted and asked for interview. If there was a refusal the evaluator could move to the second and so on but as it happened there was a positive response from each site first on each list. Once the Youthreach or CTW centre agreed to give an interview, the evaluator contacted the JLO for that area (provided that they had participated in the training).

Data for this review were gathered using the following strategies:

- taped semi-structured interviews with members of the programme Steering Committee and including the *Copping On* Co-ordinator, the Youthreach National Co-ordinator, the Assistant Principal Officer Crime Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Adult Education Organiser, Kildare VEC, representative of the Garda National Juvenile Office on the committee, the Department of Education and Science, ESF section who funded the programme, the Chief Education Officer at the Department of Health, and the Inspector responsible for the Garda National Juvenile Office;
- taped semi-structured interviews with selected Youthreach staff and Juvenile Liaison Officers;
- informal interviews were conducted with selected Youthreach participants who had taken part in personal development sessions chosen from the *Copping On* resource pack;
- observations made by the researcher at two of four review meetings convened by the *Copping On* Co-ordinator for those who had participated in the training. Observations were made in relation to the issues arising for them in the process of utilising programme resource materials and linking with other agencies;
- participation of researcher in one of the two-day residential sessions to gain a first hand insight into the training programme, the processes involved and the issues arising for those attending;

- reading and review of the resource pack, the original project proposal, and other relevant project documentation including minutes, reports, development plans;

- reading and review of relevant literature.

Table 1 below summarises the numbers of people involved in individual interviews and group discussions. A total of 45 individuals were consulted³. Two focus groups were conducted with Youthreach participants and one small group discussion consisting of two participants took place. The researcher conducted interviews at locations in Dublin, east Leinster, north and south Connaught, Munster and the Midlands region. This work involved cumulative travel in excess of 1700 miles undertaken in a five week period from late October to early December 1997.

Table 1: Number of Informants Interviewed or Participated in Group Interviews by area.

Area	Agencies and Committee	Youthreach Staff	JLO	Youthreach Participants	Total
	n	n	n	n	n
Dublin	n/a	3	2	12	17
Other Urban	n/a	2	2	2	6
Rural / Small Town	n/a	3	1	10	14
	8				8
Total	8	8	5	24	45

³ The researcher gathered a total of 23 hours of taped interviews.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR *COPPING ON*

2.1 Youthreach and its Objectives

The Youthreach Programme was launched by the Government in 1988 and introduced in 1989. It was intended as a mechanism through which the state responded to the needs of early school leavers utilising the functions of education and training agencies. The programme is targeted at those between 15 and 18 years who have left the formal schooling system without qualifications or vocational training and who are unemployed. There are two phases in the Youthreach process:

- the *foundation* phase - helps participants to overcome learning difficulties, develop confidence and identify further training and education needs;
- the *progression* phase - allows participants to pursue education and training to a higher level.

Youthreach was developed arising from the Government's Social Guarantee policy introduced in the mid 1980s which essentially gave each young person leaving school without a formal qualification access to a programme of education and training.

The intended outcomes at the end of the *foundation* year are that participants have:

- identified and come to terms with issues and difficulties currently active in their lives;
- recognised their difficulties with learning and begun to confront them;
- significantly increased their fluency in communication skills (oral, aural and written);
- significantly increased their level of numeracy;
- acquired other skills (e.g. manual, technical) which will enable them to engage in further work-related development;
- developed sufficient self-esteem to envisage learning new skills and competencies;
- placed themselves in a position to choose to progress to further education, further training, employment and constructive work activities.

Early School Leavers Provision is co-funded by the European Social Fund and the exchequer and delivered at Vocational Education Committee managed Youthreach centres and FAS funded Community Training Workshops (CTWs). Overall responsibility for Early School Leavers Provision rests with the Departments of Education and Science (Youthreach) and Enterprise and Employment (FAS / CTWs). There are two Youthreach National Co-ordinators who are responsible for overall programme development and co-ordination within their respective sectors (education and training / employment).

Hannan (1996) elaborates on the labour market context for early school leaver provision. His report outlines that those with no qualification or who have failed Junior Certificate are especially disadvantaged both within the mainstream training system and the labour market. There is an undersupply of places within Youthreach to deal with this population (1996: 9). Hannan also notes that the participants in Youthreach report positively about their experiences with the Programme (relative to their school experiences) and this is as a result of the trusting and supportive environment created by staff (1996: 14-16). He also points out that there are systemic weaknesses in the 'organisation of provision' specifically relating to the need to develop a more secure system to deal with a persistent problem (1996: 19).

As a programme, Youthreach has been criticised for

- lacking national goals and direction;
- being a temporary response to a persistent problem (early school leaving);
- being under-resourced and relying upon the energies of individual staff who are employed on temporary contracts and who are in need of training and development (ESF Evaluation Unit, 1996).⁴

The ESF Evaluation Unit recommended that acknowledgement be made of the complexity and multi-dimensional problems of exclusion being tackled by Youthreach and called for the development of structured and determined plans for the provision of integrated service across Government departments. Youthreach could be seen, the report argues, as a 'holding mechanism' between leaving school and entry to the welfare system (1996: 176).

⁴ A summary of issues raised in the Evaluation Report by the ESF Evaluation Unit is contained in appendix 2.

Youthreach participants are the primary target group for the *Copping On* Programme. They are considered to be more at risk of being charged with an offence because they get caught, cannot avoid trouble, cannot negotiate their way out of trouble, or are (in some cases) the subject of stereotyping by law enforcers⁵. Concern about the extent to which the client group is more at risk brings about the need to raise awareness of crime, offending and the criminal system within a social skills and personal development framework. The *Copping On* programme provides this framework.

It is noteworthy that while the ESF Evaluation Unit Report (1996) was critical of the existence of a 'non-prescriptive' approach⁶ within Youthreach, it is paradoxical that this has created the conditions for 'bottom-up' innovation which is a key feature of the development of *Copping On* (see section 3 below).

2.2 The Juvenile Diversion Programme and the Role of Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs)

The Juvenile Liaison Officer Scheme was launched in October 1963 arising out of a recommendation of an interdepartmental committee established in the previous year to examine the problem of increased crime among young people. A review of the scheme in 1990 by an internal Garda working party recommended a number of changes including the establishment of a National Juvenile Office to oversee and direct a Diversion Programme (see appendix 3).

Interviews with senior Gardai responsible for the JLO scheme revealed that on a national basis the scheme deals with an average of 12,500 cases in one year. Generally, those who are cautioned commit offences where they are judged to be 'unaware of the consequences of their actions'. The Garda National Juvenile Office believes that a national information strategy is required as a means of generating awareness of the consequences of committing offences. The National Juvenile Office has focused on giving such information in school settings and, in their view, the opportunity to participate in an initiative, which among other things, imparted information to young people, was to be grasped⁷.

The National Juvenile Office is responsible for formulating policy on all policing and prevention matters relating to juveniles. It drafts and makes recommendations to the Garda Commissioner. The Juvenile Diversion Programme is an internal Garda

⁵ This was a general point made by some members of the steering group and by Youthreach staff in interviews with the researcher.

⁶ This is referred to as an "eclectic" approach by the Youthreach National Co-ordinator, Education and Science.

operation and has not yet been established on a statutory basis. This may change with the enactment of the Children Bill (1996).

Involvement of JLOs in the *Copping On* Programme was intended to accord with the Garda Síochána Mission Statement. This contains a number of significant clauses within which it is clear that all Gardai, and especially JLOs, have a duty *to prevent crime*. The Mission Statement suggests that the role of Gardai is to 'provide services within a legal framework, available resources and with community support in order...to prevent and seek, identify and eliminate the cause of crime'. Moreover, it is stated that Gardai have a role in providing guidance and assistance in 'helping young people to advance their appreciation of the need to be caring, law abiding citizens' (Garda JLO Circular, 1997).

Involvement in the *Copping On* Programme by JLOs was intended to be undertaken in a 'spirit of helpfulness and support towards Youthreach trainees and staff' and that confidentiality should be respected. In addition, it was made clear to JLOs that involvement in *Copping On* was not to be a reconnaissance exercise and that sessions in which they were to be involved would begin with a clear statement as to their role within the Programme. Conflict with confidentiality clauses could arise given that Gardai JLOs have obligations to act within and enforce the law. To offset this, JLOs were advised to begin sessions by suggesting that discussions should not be about particular cases and should be about hypothetical situations (Garda JLO circular, 1997).

2.3 Crime Policy and the *Copping On* Initiative

Copping On coincides with a review of crime policies in Ireland. In mid 1997, the Minister for Justice Nora Owen, launched the discussion document *Tackling Crime*. This document is a statement of goals and strategies and begins for the first time in the history of the State to create an open debate about public policy in relation to crime. It suggests that it is necessary to take actions in relation to tackling social disadvantage through the creation of effective inter-agency structures. The report signifies that there are wider actors in the crime field than those typically seen as 'law enforcers' and that like most social issues, crime is multi-dimensional and needs to be dealt with within a strategic planning framework.

The Department of Justice has played a role in *Copping On* at Steering Committee level (see section 3 below) and the pack was developed in consultation with the prison service.

⁷ Interview with Inspector, National Juvenile Office.

2.4 The Education Sector, *Copping On* and Youthreach

The *Copping On* Programme is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the ESF section of the Department of Education and Science. The Kildare Vocational Education Committee is the contract holder for this funding. The initial proposal submitted to the Department outlined that a Steering Committee would be responsible for the monitoring of the programme (see section 3 below). *Copping On* functions as a lifeskills programme within Youthreach.

Objectives for ESF investment in programmes of in-service training in the education sector are set out in the *Human Resources Operational Programme 1994-1999* (1995) under the "Training of Trainers" measure. Much of the focus of this measure is to engage in the upskilling of teachers and managers within the education system as a whole.

The Operational Programme sets out specific targets for first and second level and in relation to Youthreach sets out to provide training for group facilitation and counselling skills (1995: 104).

2.5 The Inter-agency Approach in Context

The framework for inter-agency linkages in Ireland, as it pertains to the subject of this report, is set out in two relevant policy documents. First, the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) establishes a new framework for the Irish Civil Service in that it recognises the need for a strategic management approach to public policy and services. Thus Government Departments are required to establish goals and targets and to develop alliances in achieving these. In addition, the SMI report recognises the need for action on issues which are cross-departmental in order to achieve strategic results. Thus interdepartmental teams can be drawn together to achieve objectives in relation to issues such as drugs, unemployment, childcare, and the environment (Ireland, 1996: 15).

Second, the National Anti Poverty Strategy (NAPS) is a framework under the SMI in which Government departments identify their own role, targets and methods for their contribution to tackling poverty. It specifically identifies early school leaving and life long learning as key strategic areas for the attention of departments.

2.6 *Copping On* in the Context of Social, Personal and Health Education

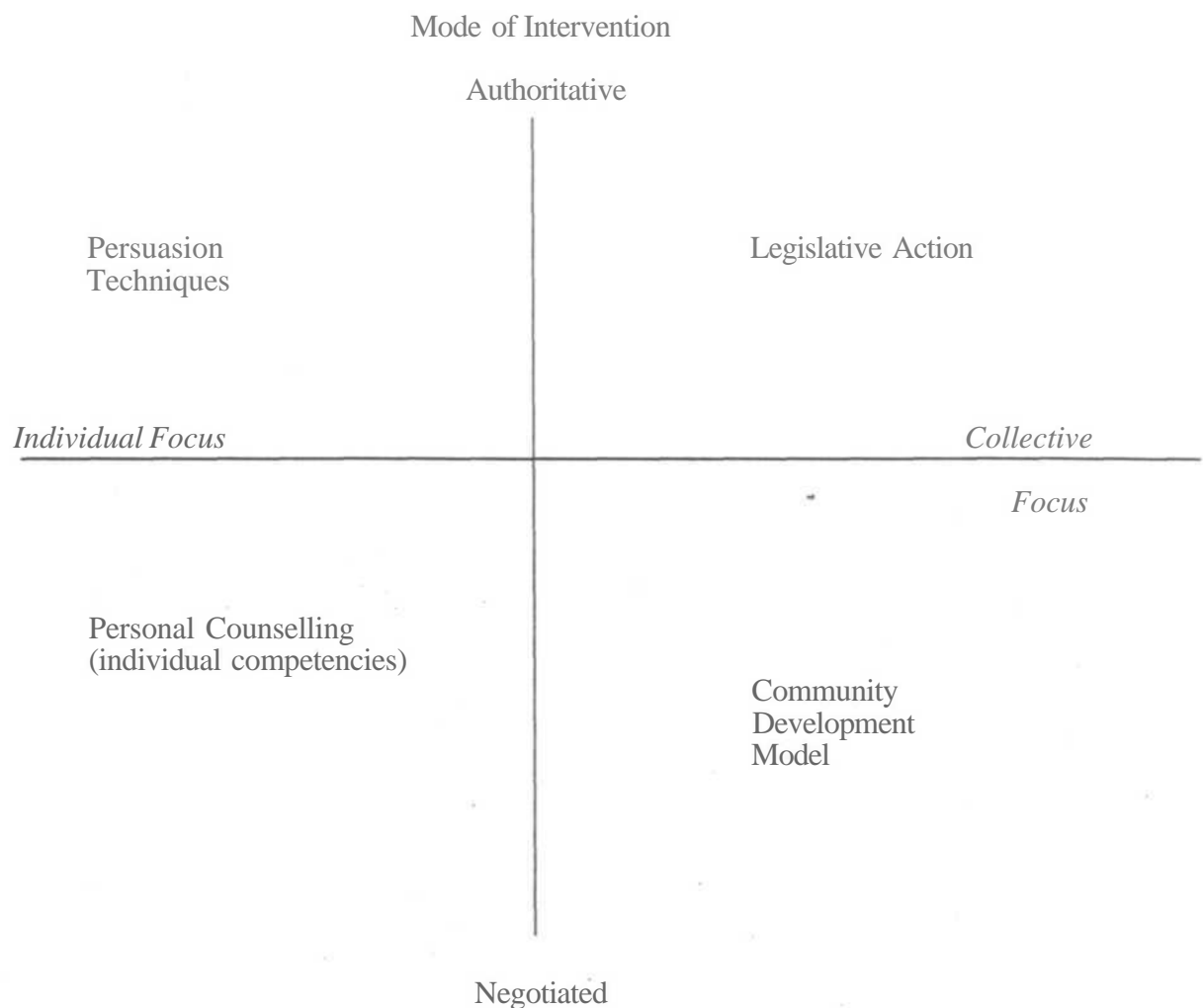
Copping On is one of a number of lifeskills programmes introduced within the education system in recent years. There has been an increased tendency towards using

this perspective as a method for the promotion of education through exploration as opposed to traditional methods of formal instruction and the imparting of factual information. There have been significant developments in relation to school based programmes with a focus on promoting positive health and social well-being generally and as a means of preventing drug use. Evaluations of such programmes have found, at best, very modest effects in terms of preventing initiation both nationally (Morgan et al 1996) and internationally (Dom and Murji, 1992) (Butler, 1994). In the United States, Dryfoos (1990) reports that there have been some positive evaluations of 'social skills training' programmes in *school* settings. She also suggests that 'there is no strong evidence that social skills training could actually prevent delinquency, but there is evidence that children with minor conduct disorders could be helped to improve their behaviour and their social relationships' (1990: 134).

The modest outcomes reported from Irish programmes may have something to do with the relative absence of a focused debate on models of health promotion. Butler (1994) argues that as a consequence of this the tendency has been towards models which concentrate upon achieving individual outcomes. Such programmes run the risk of engaging in a process known as 'victim blaming' as their basic assumption is that young people are *deficient* in their capacity to make choices. In considering appropriate models of health promotion (or skills programmes which seek to promote a form of social well-being through more active citizenship), there are four models to consider as set out in Figure 1 below. It is not the sole intention of this review to engage in categorisation but for discussion purposes it is crucial to determine the position of the *Copping On* Programme within social and health education more generally.

In considering its broader position it is clear that the lifeskills dimension is based on a 'deficits' perspective - it focuses on lack of skills in the individual and seeks to provide individual competencies to give effect to active decision making. Such a perspective places *Copping On* within the authoritative-individualistic framework or to the left hand side of the diagram below. A similar approach is adopted by the drug prevention programme "On my own two feet" which like *Copping On* aims to provide information in a skills development context.

Figure 1: Models of Health Promotion



Source: Beanie (1991) in Bunton et al (1995). The diagram has two axes to represent the focus of intervention, i.e. whether individual or collective, and the mode of intervention, i.e. whether the intervention is delivered in an authoritative or within a negotiated framework.

The above model is useful for considering the range of practices which agencies or particular centres might adopt in implementing a lifeskills programme. It is possible to adopt a style which seeks to promote individual competencies in a broader development framework. This raises a question in relation to the extent to which any centre providing the programme is rooted in or is engaged with existing community structures. Youthreach centres are distinct in that they are not schools and yet are not indigenous community organisations and as such there may be varying degrees to which the different centres integrate into the local community context.

3. DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES FOR THE *COPPING ON* PROGRAMME

3.1 Programme Origins and Objectives

The Programme has its earliest origins in workshops devised in 1994 and 1995 by the person who was to become the *Copping On* Programme Co-ordinator and the author of the resource pack, Marian Quinn. While working in the Youthreach centre in Leixlip the originator decided to develop some lifeskills group activities designed to challenge behaviour of some of the participants. The originator began this process because of her concern with the levels of joyriding and use of substances amongst trainees. The group had an antipathy to the Gardai. There was a need, as it was perceived, to challenge the offending behaviour of the young people and the underlying attitudes which precipitate this. The project that she developed, aimed to 'enable young people to make informed choices about their involvement in criminal activity' and to 'develop a critique of the criminal justice system'. Sessions were organised and a trip to Mountjoy was undertaken as a means of dealing with the mythology of prison stories which the young people had picked up. To broaden the scope of the project, a 'crime prevention workshop' was held on 6th June 1995 and drew together other Youthreach personnel, probation projects, community training workshops and Garda JLOs. The workshop participants, discussed the resources which the originator had developed in Leixlip. The workshop was also a response by the originator to numerous telephone requests from colleagues for her to share her work or to run the programme in their centres.

The *Copping On* Initiative developed within a Youthreach setting and as such is grounded in Youthreach practice. The County Kildare VEC has encouraged the staff of the Leixlip centre to emphasise creativity and reflective, experiential learning as the means of engaging the young people in discovering a sense of self and awareness of others within their environment. The *Copping On* programme developed in this context. The need for the project, according to those most closely involved in developing it from its earliest stage, is two fold:

- to challenge the attitudes of young people in relation to rule breaking, offending and crime;
- to open up dialogue for Youthreach and other staff as a means of getting closer to those who are marginalised because of behaviours, attitudes or predisposition.

Thus, the programme is intended to be a creative way of engaging with Youthreach participants and opening up channels for dialogue, challenge and personal growth. It is also an implied aspiration that *Copping On* would help 'to re-invigorate practice throughout Youthreach and maintain the focus on its personal development goals'⁸.

The Leixlip centre staff had a positive relationship with their own local JLO and, more importantly, had contact with a particular JLO, who while working in another area, was invited to link into the development of exercises and groupwork. The role played by this JLO was of critical importance for opening up the possibilities for other JLOs to become involved.

The workshop provided a focus for thinking about the materials in a broader perspective. Those participating were anxious that there would be a follow-up and that there would be some response from the National Youthreach Co-ordinator and the Department of Education and Science. The originator held discussions with both. A proposal was prepared by the originator in conjunction with the National Youthreach Co-ordinator and the Garda National Juvenile Office. This proposal was submitted to the Department of Education and Science ESF Section for consideration.

In describing the background to the proposal its authors suggested:

This is a new area of programme development for Youthreach , and has raised exciting possibilities. It is anticipated that this experience may be the precursor to the development of a crime prevention strategy as a core area of the Youthreach programme (Crime Prevention Proposal, 1996).

It was clear from the proposal that its initial promoters believed in its crime prevention potential. The stated aim of the initiative was:

To develop, disseminate and implement an interdepartmental crime prevention strategy, within the framework of the Youthreach programme (ibid).

The specific objectives proposed were:

- to develop a resource pack, based on the programme initiated in Leixlip;
- to pilot such a programme, to ensure the relevance of application;

⁸ View of Youthreach National Co-ordinator (Education and Science) in written communication.

- to implement a national training programme with Youthreach staff and JLOs;
- to provide follow-up support for those staff involved in the training;
- to evaluate and document this initiative and draw recommendations for future developments.

Thus, three key elements of the initiative were envisaged:

- a resource pack;
- a related training programme;
- a review to identify development opportunities.

The 'crime prevention strategy', the initial proposal states, has two aspects:

- (i) facilitating young people in identifying factors which influence their decision making;
- (ii) understanding the judicial system.

From the outset it is clear that there was a clear working understanding of the focus of the initiative. The fact that a project had been organised at LeixJip Youthreach centre gave some basis on which to focus the objectives. The central issue was that there was a clearly established demand for the project and that it had the potential to develop as a national programme. The interest taken in the initiative by the Youthreach National Co-ordinator and by the Garda National Juvenile Office set it into another context. There was a clear and decisive intent by the authors of the initial proposal that it would be an interdepartmental initiative and that it would lay the groundwork for a more substantial initiative in the future.

The Co-ordinator's salary was paid to the Kildare VEC who released Marian Quinn for three days per week to develop the programme resources, organise and facilitate the training workshops and to work towards the publication of the resource pack.

3.2 Composition of the Steering Committee

As an interdepartmental initiative involving the education and justice sectors, the proposal suggested that the programme be advised by a committee, with five members nominated by the Department of Education and Science, Department of Justice, National Juvenile Office, Kildare VEC, and the National Youthreach Co-ordinator. It subsequently became an agreed condition of funding the programme that such a committee would be established. The initial committee was comprised of the following:

- the originator and Programme Co-ordinator
- Adult Education Organiser, Kildare VEC, funding contract holder and initial sponsors of the work undertaken in the Leixlip centre;
- Youthreach National Co-ordinator, nominated by the Department of Education and Science;
- Supervising JLO Sergeant Dublin Metropolitan Area, North, nominated by the Garda National Juvenile Office;
- Prison Education Service, were invited to be involved and later a representative at assistant principal level was nominated by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform;
- an initial place on the committee was reserved for a representative of the Department of Education and Science, Psychological Services and this was filled during the period in which this review was conducted.

3.3 Steering Committee Role

The Steering Committee held its first meeting in October 1996 at which it discussed its purpose as a 'monitoring group'. The role of the Committee was minuted as follows:

- "to provide a sounding board for the group;
- to act as links to represented agencies;
- to act as a guide to development of the project - a support and advocacy function;
- Steering Committee to ensure the integrity of the programme;
- act as a monitoring committee to provide supervision for Co-ordinator;
- not an executive group i.e. not to be carrying out the work;
- group will also provide some credibility when dealing with other agencies" (Steering Committee Minutes).

The Co-ordinator, it was agreed, would take responsibility for circulation of agenda and facilitate meetings. Each representative would take responsibility for communicating with their own agency. The Committee was involved in discussing the finer detail of programme development and strategies for linking with agencies at national and local level. For example, a key component of earlier work of the Leixlip centre was a prison encounter visit. The Committee discussed this and were clear that there were different philosophies behind this ranging from the 'shock tactics approach' to the 'developmental / educational model'. Moreover, the committee and the Co-ordinator were involved in discussions of possible strategies for integrating a prison encounter dimension. The style in which this would be included in the programme had a clear

focus - there would be sessions to prepare for the visit and a debriefing afterwards which set it in a lifeskills context.

Goal setting was to some extent *a/a/r accompli* by the time the committee had formed but the process of formulating the programme, the goal setting and the framing of objectives were undertaken by the Co-ordinator and in consultation with others (some of whom were to become members of the Steering Committee). The committee used meetings as a method for reflecting on progress in achieving goals.

In comparative terms, the *Copping On* Programme has been developed within a relatively short period of time. Such processes can take up to a period of eight years to develop from the initial idea to the creation of a national programme. It has to be acknowledged that there is no exact blueprint for developing such initiatives. Moreover, health and social education programmes while agency led are also usually driven by keen individuals who are the initial generators of the idea.⁹ *Copping On* is no exception in this regard.

The initiative was efficiently led and delivered upon by the Programme Co-ordinator who was engaged on a three day per week basis but whose actual hours went beyond this. In addition, the Programme Co-ordinator worked alone which proved to be an isolating experience at times given that she was covering the whole country and was effectively working in isolation from the agencies involved and without the support of other staff¹⁰.

3.4 Inter-agency Involvement

In essence the Steering Committee was a focus for vertically linking the programme to the represented agencies, and at the same time, a forum for horizontal exchange in developing and delivering the programme. The extent to which the representatives on the committee were in a position to deliver for their agencies is problematic. The extent to which there was effective delegation is unclear also. The initial involvement of the agencies around the work being carried out by the Leixlip centre was the motivation

behind an inter-agency approach. This was because those active at practitioner level could see the benefits of this level of co-ordination. It is clear that from its origins that the initiative and its inter-agency dimension has emerged from 'bottom up' demands. The transformation into a national programme had to be negotiated and approved at official level and those at management level acted responsively and effectively in delivering this.

⁹ Issues raised in an interview with Chief Education Officer, Department of Health.

Transferring a programme from a local to a national level is complex. It raises issues such as the extent to which the sponsoring agencies fully endorse the programme and its objectives, and more importantly, whether they are committed to drawing lessons from implementing the programme for developing their own policy and structures. The fact that the Committee is composed of a senior level personnel reflects the commitment of each participating agency / department to the Programme.

3.5 Issues in Relation to Delivery and Outcomes

The structure developed around *Copping On* further underlines the need for linking Youthreach workshops, for the purposes of innovation and dissemination of models of good practice. In developing a national structure around a local response the promoters of the programme have assumed to some extent that the Leixlip experience is easily transferable. This matter is explored later in this report in the discussion of issues relating to the overall utilisation of materials in implementing the Programme post-training.

In relation to the specific objectives which the Steering Committee set itself, as outlined in section 3.1 above, it has to be noted that this group has been successful in relation to the following:

- the development of the resource materials and its subsequent publication;
- the organisation of ten residential training sessions which involved approximately 130 people in 1997;
- a series of follow-up workshops was organised as a means of identifying further developments and supports in successfully implementing the programme;
- the Steering Committee membership was broadened and brought forward a development plan for 1998.

The evaluator conducted a preliminary telephone survey¹⁰ in order to establish whether Youthreach centres were implementing the programme by utilising the lifeskills materials, actively planning to use them or whether they had taken no action following their training. As summarised in table 2 below, half of those surveyed said that they were actively utilising the materials in life and social skills sessions with their participants and one third said that they were involved in a planning process of one

¹⁰ The Co-ordinator worked from a small shared office at NU1 Maynooth.

¹¹ Based on a response rate of just under fifty percent. This rate of response is partly explained by non-return of telephone messages, no answer after two retries or relevant person left position or on leave.

form or other. Only five respondents were not using the materials and not planning to use them. This indicates that the training programme has stimulated activity very successfully. Follow up workshops conducted by the Co-ordinator focused on sharing practice and identifying supports required for those centres not implementing the programme.

Table 2: Stage of Implementation by Area

Area	Implementing	Planning	No Action	Total
	n	n	n	n
Dublin	6	3	1	10
Other Urban	2	2	1	5
Rural / Small Town	7	5	3	15
Total	15	10	5	30

Based upon this output, the *Copping On* Programme Steering Committee has clearly demonstrated that they have met targets and objectives. This reflects the level of experience on the committee, the energy of the Co-ordinator and the clarity and realism of the targets (set out in 3.1 above).

The process through which project issues are transferred to policy and decision making levels within the respective agencies is an ongoing question for the Steering Committee. This has raised the issue of the status of this group within a highly centralised decision making system. As pointed out in section 2 of this report, there has been a radical shift in the framework within which the civil service operates in Ireland. It is a crucial point to make at this juncture, that despite the ongoing matters which have to be resolved, *Copping On* is a focus for inter-agency collaboration and embodies the spirit of institutional change. In this regard, the agencies involved in the *Copping On* programme have been giving meaning and expression to the SMI. This working together across agencies and departmental functions requires a commitment to such process at the centre, and moreover, it is important that there is equal weight given to collaboration by each respective stakeholder.

It should be noted that while this review was taking place, the *Copping On* Steering Committee moved towards experimenting with a local partnership approach to the programme. This approach is important in that it recognises that there are a range of specialist and non-specialist agencies which young people have contact with at local level including their own indigenous organisations such as community groups, local services / partnerships and youth clubs.

3.6 Costs of Developing and Operating the Programme

The direct expenditure on the *Copping On* Programme by the Department of Education and Science in the first twelve months amounted to £27,066 from the ESF section and supplemented by £10,492 for residential training from the Department's In-career Development Unit. Each agency participating in training effectively co-financed the Programme by a multiplier based upon expenditure on travel and residential training facility costs. The *Copping On* Programme average cost in its first twelve months of operation is estimated at £289 per resource pack unit. This is based on the simple division of total *direct* expenditure (£37, 558) by the total number of persons trained (approximately 130).

4. THE *COPPING ON* TRAINING PROGRAMME AND THE RESOURCE PACK

4.1 Description of the Programme Dimension

4.1.1 Background

The 'programme dimension' for the purposes of discussion in this section of the report refers to

- (i) the training sessions for Youthreach and JLO staff;
- (ii) the resource pack.

The training aspect of the programme is delivered through a two day residential session. Ten sessions were organised in 1997 and were held at regional venues to enable personnel from all parts of the country to attend. The first eight of the ten sessions focused primarily upon Youthreach and JLO staff while the remaining two were intended to attract a range of people from a variety of agencies including youth services, probation projects, community Gardai, Garda Special [diversion] Projects, juvenile places of detention and special schools.

The resource pack consists of

- facilitators / guidelines or notes written and researched by the co-ordinator;
- a set of group exercises sub-divided into sections on communications, ice-breakers, assertiveness, introduction to crime; understanding the system; relationships; and 'right and wrong'.

4.1.2 The Training Objectives and Content

It was decided by the Programme promoters that it was crucial to have a training programme for staff. There is no definitive statement of the objectives of this but it is clear that the purpose of the two-day training sessions was to:

- give information on the Programme;
- provide an overview of Youthreach for JLOs and the diversion scheme for Youthreach staff;
- familiarise participants with the resource materials;
- clarify the purpose of a crime prevention / awareness initiative;

- identify the means of developing programmes at centres;
- identify follow-up issues;
- establish relationships and networks between centres and with JLOs.

4.1.3 The Philosophy, Aims and Rationale

The resource pack identifies the central aspects of the Programme philosophy as:

- (i) young person as individual and unique as is each group;
- (ii) young people learn most effectively through their own discovery;
- (iii) balance the provision of a safe place to explore and discuss whilst also challenging the young people's behaviours and attitudes.

The central aims of the Programme as identified by the pack are to:

- (i) reduce the risk of offending behaviour;
- (ii) reduce harmful / damaging behaviour amongst young people e.g. bullying and alcohol abuse;
- (iii) reduce the incidence of offending amongst young people;
- (iv) improve relations between young people and the Gardai;
- (v) provide young people with a framework to understand and critique the judicial system;
- (vi) acknowledge their own experience of that system.

The pack also outlines the *rationale* of the *Copping On* Programme as follows:

- (i) that there is a demonstrable correlation between offending behaviour and early school-leaving;
- (ii) that this level of risk can be reduced by enabling the young people to develop their cognitive skills and subsequently their behaviour;
- (iii) that Youthreach provides a safe place for young people to discuss these issues influencing their decisions and behaviours, and has the ability to offer a challenging programme;
- (iv) that Youthreach has the resources and networks to put in place follow up as appropriate;

The Programme aims and rationale raise evaluation questions in relation to the following:

(i) *Improving police-youth relations*: the underlying assumption in improving relations might be to develop young peoples' allegiances towards judicial processes and institutions, i.e. the police and courts. This could be assessed in discussions with young people.

(ii) *The capacity of Youthreach to deliver and follow-up on the Programme* assumes that the human and physical resources are in place to introduce the *Copping On* Programme across the country. Interviews with staff could identify the relevant issues that there are in implementation.

4.1.4 Overview and Comment on the Resource Pack

The lifeskills and personal development component of the pack utilises existing group exercises with which most group workers and lifeskills teachers will be familiar. The pack also contains a section which aids an exploration of the crime issue through brainstorming and value and attitude clarification exercises. This section contains the following exercises, for example:

- a brainstorm which explores the meaning of crime and how it is distinct from something which is 'wrong';
- a similar exercise focusing on factors which get one 'into trouble' and factors which keep one 'out of trouble';
- the selection by group participants of their own position in relation to a particular value statement and a discussion about this;
- the 'my prisoner' exercise, a heuristic for thinking about who prisoners are and the processes they are put through in becoming prisoners; the exercise also encourages participants to think about processes over which they can take personal control and those which are beyond their immediate power.

The facilitators' notes include a section on planning a programme with a specific group through a needs analysis exercise, information on the judicial system and a section on offender profiles.

The section on offender profiles makes a valid point about the need to be careful that the results of prisoner or offender studies are not used to reinforce existing stereotypes of young people. There is, as the author points out, a set of underlying issues which have not to do with personality or behaviour but the social and economic context - poverty, unemployment, marginalisation. The facilitators guidelines are excellent in that they

provide a succinct summary of the justice system. This factual information is a starting point to helping young people to develop a critique of the justice system.

A weakness of the pack in the view of this evaluator is that it is biased in its use of offender studies which, it might well be argued, has the potential to undermine the positive intent to help young people to develop a critique. McCullagh (1996: 25) makes the point that the incarcerated population do not constitute a balanced cross-section and as a subject of study they 'cannot be considered a comprehensive guide to the characteristics that criminals have in common'. A more balanced view might be obtained by drawing upon works by authors such as Young (1987); Corrigan (1979); Cicourel (1968) which give us an idea of how offending is produced and how it is 'socially constructed', often by law enforcers. Also, Engel and Hurrelmann (1988) have conducted a self report study in schools which demonstrated that the risk of being involved in a deviant or delinquent act is raised where young people perceive that their mobility chances are closed off, and crucially, where they feel that this closure is unjust (1988: 170). This might present the user of the resource pack with a more balanced picture of the nature of youth crime and assist them further in identifying the precise *antecedent* conditions which contribute to crime and offending.

4.2 The Relevance and Value of the Programme and the Resource Materials

In a retrospective review such as this, assessment concepts such as *relevance* and *value* is limited in scope (see section 1.2 above). The researcher approached this in interviews by asking informants to reflect on its value in terms of their work, the area in which they worked and the nature of crime and offending in these contexts. Youthreach participants were also asked to reflect on the nature of crime from their experiences and to indicate the value and relevance of the pack from their perspective.

Youthreach Staff

The resource materials were seen broadly as relevant to the Youthreach setting but there were differences of emphasis amongst the staff. One respondent stated when asked if (and how) he thought it was useful:

"yes, language is appropriate, myself and other staff had a row about this in other packs...I don't have to translate the materials" (Youthreach staff .Dublin).

This seems to be the general perception but it also means that the resource pack gives the staff the means to respond to the needs of participants in a more flexible manner:

"I have to reinterpret some. It is what will work. You try something out and you get feedback so it's done different next time. You have to be flexible, you can't just follow it" (Youthreach staff, urban area).

The importance of flexibility was stressed by respondents in terms of the sequential flow of the material. The pack is specifically not designed to be followed strictly in a 'lesson one to ten' fashion but to be used as a resource bank which can assist the staff in dealing with situations either as they arise or when there is a particular issue which is significant in the area. One Youthreach worker suggested:

"I have not used it as a pack on crime but it is a basis for dealing with the problem. It is not something that you implement over six weeks but over two years, as long as they are here the pack will be needed" (Youthreach staff, Dublin).

Youthreach staff and Co-ordinators who had undertaken the *Copping On* training programme were all familiar with lifeskills and personal development resource packs. One informant described in an interview how he had used several different packs to deal with the same issue but the *Copping On* materials saved him preparation time:

"It draws it all together, puts a structure on it" (Youthreach staff, Dublin).

Some respondents were unsure of the subtle distinction which has been drawn between *Copping On* as a crime prevention initiative and as a crime awareness initiative. It is noted that the initial workshops and the original proposal conceptualised the programme as a prevention programme whereas the pack was published as a crime awareness programme. It is a small point but it creates difficulties for staff in targeting trainees.

"For guys already on the road, already well into offending - [and] we have these here - and to introduce the pack to the whole group would be a negative. How do you discriminate? The distinction is not always clear" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, rural area).

The development of the initiative from being "prevention" to "awareness" in nature and intent is significant and is indicative of the considerable development of the Programme by the Steering Committee and Co-ordinator. Crime awareness has a broad meaning in the sense that all sections of society are potential targets for consciousness raising and

thus the problem of stigmatisation is minimised if introduced to trainees in this context. In a Youthreach setting, *crime prevention* seems to cause conceptual difficulties in deciding which group to select within the workshop / centre. This has to do with the distinction there is between primary and secondary prevention and what and whom the programme is aimed at. Youthreach staff have deployed various strategies for deciding who to select. The decision is usually more a practical or logistical¹² one and does not necessarily involve a consideration of whether the programme is *primary prevention* (targeted at all trainees) or *secondary prevention* (targeted at some who satisfy certain criteria) in its intent.

Youthreach staff were asked by the researcher to describe the crime / offending problem in their areas and then asked a series of questions in relation to what they thought about the training and the resource pack and the impact it might have.

One respondent suggested that in the small rural town where he worked that there were Youthreach participants who were drawn from families where there was intergenerational unemployment and multiple deprivation. When asked about the value of the resource pack in dealing with crime in this setting he suggested:

"You have a better chance on a one to one to break the cycle - get them a job and work experience...*Copping On* can't solve one individual's problems. It is good at getting people to think but not those well into offending" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, rural area).

Another respondent, who was planning to introduce the resource materials suggested:

"In part, it's a discussion programme...getting people to think for themselves, getting them to think where the consequences lie, where it will lead, [it helps] To resist pressures in reality. Some people control them in the housing estates" (CTW staff, urban area).

It appears from the interviews conducted, that the overall value of the programme as perceived by Youthreach staff, is that it does / will help young people to think about crime and situations that they find themselves in. Youthreach staff see the potential for its use and the need which the resource materials serve regardless of whether they were actively using it or not at the time of interview.

¹² Such as including those who happen to be in a particular training group, e.g. catering or hairdressing, for which the person trained under the *Copping On* programme has responsibility, or as resource levels permit, e.g. physical space, available staff.

Youthreach Participants

The *Copping On* programme is premised on the notion of influencing the development of cognitive skills, decision making skills and therefore the behaviour of young people¹³. The main focus of this review was not on the specific outcomes for young people. Nevertheless there was some consultation with Youthreach participants through small group discussions in three locations around the country where the programme materials were being used by staff. Participants were asked a series of questions about their area, crime and rule breaking in their area and what actions might be taken to deal with it. They were then asked more specific questions about *Copping On*. The researcher used a copy of the pack as a cue to contextualise the questions. On the whole the young people who took part in group discussions were positive about the pack and the sessions which they had undergone from it. They perceived it as being a means of letting them know authoritatively about the consequences" of committing an offence, and moreover, that it could be explored as an issue through discussion, writing and engaging in project work:

Dublin Area: Focus Group Discussion with Youthreach Participants

- MB: "What have you been doing here in Youthreach about crime"?
- Female 1: "Talking about it".
- Female 2: "Writing about it".
- MB: "What about talking and writing about it? How have you found that"?
- Female 1: "It helps you like, to steer away from that. Like, not to get involved in that [crime] because you are aware of the consequences, like, because you know the consequences, you know, if you're doing projects on it and all that".

Other Urban Area: Small Group Discussion with Youthreach Participants

- Female 1: "You hear stories and bits are added on to them and all that, and some of them don't be true and everyone be talking about them".
- MB: "Right, okay. And what's the benefit of this [pointing to *Copping On* pack] then"?
- Female 1: Tell's you like what happens to you like when you get involved in, in [...] crime. What happens to you".

A key benefit of the programme materials is to allow for a discussion of complex issues in a supportive setting in keeping with both the nature of Youthreach and the *Copping*

¹³ Point made in interview with Programme Co-ordinator.

On rationale. The security of the setting, like other aspects of Youthreach, depends very much upon the commitment and energy of staff. An issue raised in interviews and especially in group interviews with participants is that young people within Youthreach are engaged in a process of dialogue - with their peers in their own community setting and with staff in the centre. *Copping On* is an intervention within this dialogue in so far as one of the aims of the programme is to facilitate decision making. This has to do with helping young people choose between discourses - that of the adult world as reflected in formal scientific and state discourse, and that of their own social, economic, political and cultural context¹⁴. The intervention in this process by Youthreach staff using the *Copping On* programme is on the one hand the greatest asset of the lifeskills resource materials and on the other it constitutes a set of unresolved complexities. This has to do with the validity and legitimacy of discourses as in the following extract from interview notes.

Dublin Area: Focus Group Discussion with Youthreach Participants

The group began to interpret the questions about offending and rule breaking as questions about drugs - especially cannabis use. It appears that for this particular group, it was largely their reason for not trusting Gardai. They could not understand how some activities like smoking cannabis were treated so severely. Their perception was that it did not do them any harm - 'it helps us to relax' and yet they were in fear of criminalisation. The issue was probed further.

MB: "Where do you get your information"

Female 1: "Just pick it up".

Female 2: "Friends".

Female 1: "It said in the book there [gesticulates towards *Copping On* pack] that hash can be psychologically and, what is it?, physically addictive".

Female 7: "Do you know that young fella on my bleeding road - he's on gear now. He's strung out. He took the fucking hash and now he's strung out to bits on gear".

MB: "What's the difference between the information here in the pack and that information you get on the street"?

Female 1: "They think they know it all because they smoke [cannabis] you know what I mean".

MB: "Yes, but you are getting information from one source here [*Copping On*] and another source outside".

¹⁴ A basic explanation of the concept of discourse is 'spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 7). It is how individuals derive meaning and how they fashion themselves, their values and their behaviour.

Female 1: "Because one is telling you, is putting you wide, saying 'don't smoke it', and then the other is saying 'ah yeah, you get a deadly buzz'".

Female 2: "Mostly in books it's the scientific facts like..."

Male 3: (interjects) "Better off not touching it, you know"?

Female 2: **"....that's probably been tested and all like".**

Female 1: "But they can only put so much in books".

Male 4: "It's up to people if you smoke hash and then go on to gear or whatever. It's up to their selves".

[edit: interruption, laughter and then resettles]

Female 2: "Most of the information that you're given by your friends, most of it is not true".

Male 3: "Most of it is not true here [Youthreach] as well".

YR Staff: "That's a pack that's after been developed by people that have gone out and researched and found out about it, the drugs".

Male 5: "Have they smoked it though"?

Male 4: "Have they tried it"?

[edit: overtaking]

Female 2: "You can't write that in a book like, what it is like until you have tried it".

MB: "The question is, what information do you use and why?"

Female 1: "I believe the one out of the book".

Female 2: "The two of them. I believe most of it out of the book but, I don't know, I think you have to experience anything about it before you can write anything about it".

Male 4: "I'd rather hear it from an instructor".

Male 6: "If they don't experience it, there's no point writing about it".

Female 2: "Like you have to know what the stone is like".

The discussion turns then to crime and offending in general and the group are asked to consider applying this thinking about who has authoritative knowledge to the stealing of a bicycle:

MB: "...can you say that they [a Garda or teacher] don't know anything about it because they never stole a bike"?

Female 1: "No"

MB: "But they'd know what the consequences are".

Female 1: "Yeah".

Female 2: "Yeah. But you just say 'so', fuck it, it's just a bike, just rob it, that's **all**".

- MB: "But do you see my point?"
- Female 1: "Yeah, but to know what the consequences are before you do it, do you know what I mean? Like if you're prepared to take that bike, you should be prepared to take the consequences. Like deal with the consequences".
- Female 2: "Yeah, but some people just think: 'ah well, I just get remanded or a strike out', you know. That's all they think".
- Female 1: "They don't think. They just don't think. They think like after they **done** it and that's too late. And you can't change it".
- Male 3: "It would be stupid if everyone went by the rules [edit]. Go driving to work and then come home and just sit there, watch the telly. That'd be stupid. If everyone was the same".

From the above extract a number of issues arise:

- that the Copping Programme is a useful tool for aiding reflection by the young people on consequences of offending, and an aid to discerning their position in relation to formal and indigenous discourses;
- **there** is a possibility that this may in turn influence decision making and behaviour (but it requires further in-depth research to clarify whether it will);
- that young people undergoing the *Copping On* programme use experiences with the programme materials reflexively - i.e. they incorporate those elements of the critique of the judicial system to develop their own understanding of it;
- that there is a tendency to expose contradictions¹⁵ in discourse which could just as easily exacerbate their sense of powerlessness from institutions [judicial and educational] as reinforce allegiances to them.

This latter point is of critical importance in that it requires that those leading the exercise have the skills to handle the complexity of the issues involved here. The resource pack itself makes the point that participants should be encouraged to identify aspects of their lives over which they can take some control. This may have the effect of helping the participants to maintain a degree of perspective, or it may reinforce their frustration. Particular social or political events may have an influence in how the exercises are received in that an atmosphere where public figures appear not to receive the same severity of sanction when they transgress, could influence the degree of openness of

¹⁵ For example, which version of the truth is to be believed in relation to cannabis smoking.

individuals to live peacefully with these apparent contradictions. It is suggested that there is a need for Youthreach staff and the Gardai to address this in their everyday practice and especially with their use of the programme materials.

The Programme material contains exercises on victimology - awareness of the relationship between offender and victim. This has to be set in context in that offenders and victims tend to be from the most vulnerable groups in society (see Walklate 1998: Young 1994). This aspect of the programme could be quite empowering for the participants. However, arising from the interviews conducted for this review, there is a potentially delimiting factor of the *Copping On* resource materials: that the intention to improve relations between young people and the Gardai may be questioned by young people in some locations where the experience of young people has been a negative one. This may have to do with the experience of a form of *double victimisation*:

MB: "Has anyone here been a victim"?

Female: "Yeah, years ago, when I was about 12, me and this young one that I used to hang around with were coming back up the road [...] and we had her brother's bike with her and we got up to near where we live like, and some junkie came up behind us and held the two of us up with a syringe and took the bike off us. That was years ago and the Garda done nothing about it".

MB: "They did nothing"?

Female: "They done fucking nothing".

MB: "How did that make you feel".

Female: "Like shite, you know what I mean. Like I knew he'd be gone like, we weren't going to find him. But they could have done something, even go out and look for him. It's because it's [this area], yeah, 'they're all scumbags', that's what they think like. And they're not all scumbags".

That an injustice had been done and compounded by what this young woman felt was another does not augur well for improving relations between young people and the

Gardai. Victim awareness is an essentially positive element within the programme and it also sensitises participants to contradictions about their own experiences. The promise

J of this approach is to sharpen the participants' sense of justice.

j For some of the Garda JLOs participating in the training programme, it has given them a clearer understanding of some of these dilemmas. One JLO interviewed stated:

"Doing some of the exercises out of the pack at the training made me feel like that young person and the experiences they go through and the decisions and dilemmas they have to face" (JLO Dublin south).

This is positive feedback for the programme promoters in that it appears from the interviews that the programme does promote a sense of solidarity between JLOs and young people and that this is a key strength to be built upon. Moreover, the key challenge is to find ways of connecting these positive experiences of JLOs with the negative experiences of young people¹⁶ and to maximise opportunities for dialogue in this area. The process of engagement also has benefits for the Youthreach participants:

"We couldn't get into the disco. There was a Garda there who said 'you can't come in here, you need i.d.' but then John [the JLO] arrived and he got us all in" (Youthreach participant, interview).

On the whole it has to be acknowledged that the overall process where young people and their teachers or instructors undergo a joint exercise does have benefits which are about building networks and enabling negotiation in situations where young people might otherwise be powerless. Knowing particular Gardai as a result of having had contact in the Youthreach centre was very valuable in this and other instances. However, there was no indication from any of the interviews undertaken that young people who had participated in sessions from the *Copping On* programme had changed **their attitudes** to Gardai in general.

Juvenile Liaison Officers

Those JLOs who saw the resource materials as valuable were those who were most involved in its implementation. Two JLOs interviewed were actively involved in planning sessions with Youthreach staff and participated in all *Copping On* sessions. One of these JLOs suggested that:

"**You** can pick up the pack and get ideas. You can plan a session where you **sit** down with the kids or give information. It has general applicability ... once you have some group training" (JLO (a), Dublin).

Those who saw it as least valuable were those whose involvement was curtailed by either lack of skill in groupwork, those with little time to give and those who had difficulty in negotiating entry due to the absence of a relationship with Youthreach or

¹⁶ Or vice versa as the case may be.

their own lack of skill in this area. One JLO interviewed wanted to play a role as a partner in planning with the Youthreach centre but felt that he was being treated as a resource by Youthreach. His role was restricted by this and his own lack of group training:

"I told them about the Juvenile Diversion Programme, arrest procedures, Garda decisions ...I don't see how I could do more or what other role I could have. Not in lifeskills. I'm more used to a classroom and structure where you have a captive audience... (JLO (b), Dublin).

The views of JLOs in relation to value and relevance of the resource pack is complex. Their perception of it depends upon the situation they are in and the relationship they have with Youthreach in using the resource materials. From interviews with JLOs a number of factors are significant in how they perceive the value and relevance of the pack. These are:

- the extent to which the JLO has had some group work training either by having previous experience of groups or undertaken a course which involved a group work dimension;
- the willingness of the JLO to be open to participating on an equal basis with young people and Youthreach staff in a group learning process;
- the lack of groupwork training leading to JLO being uncertain about role, cautious about issues which might emerge which potentially have implications for their future relationships with young people;
- as a consequence of the latter, being happier to deal with the Youthreach group in a didactic way by giving factual inputs;
- availability of time and the number of Youthreach centres in the catchment area covered by the JLO also gives them a narrower perception of their role in using the pack and in turn their perception of its relevance to them;
- how the JLO interprets their own role and where the emphasis lies within this - whether they see themselves totally as the officers responsible for the Diversion Programme or whether this responsibility is mixed with a crime prevention role;

- the extent to which they have a positive working relationship with the Youthreach centre in the area as where tensions exist between them, the JLO sees him or herself as a secondary actor within the Programme;
- the skills and abilities of the JLO to negotiate entry to the Youthreach group.

4.3 Training Issues

The Programme does not aim to give group work skills to the participants. To some extent it was assumed that participants would have these skills. The initial proposal went as far as saying that a pack should not be used until the training programme had been undertaken and that the participant undertake 200 hours groupwork with young people¹⁷. While most Youthreach staff are familiar with groupwork methods Juvenile Liaison Officers are generally not. This is not to say that Youthreach staff are necessarily trained to a common standard and that the style and ethos of groupwork practice does not vary. There are many models guiding practice, a factor which is largely influenced by the skills, training and work background of the staff. There are ongoing training issues which were raised in interviews and in review meetings:

- the need for training in basic groupwork for those who require it;
- some staff attending a review day were anxious that 'workshop skills' staff should be encouraged to undertake an introductory lifeskills course as a way of gaining an insight into the work of personal development staff;
- it was seen that this would be a means of building support within centres.

This latter point was emphasised by Youthreach staff in both review meetings and individual interviews. One interviewee expressed this in such a way that appears to point towards a contradiction with lifeskills within the Youthreach context:

"I mean I would be involved in quite a few different programmes that come up and ... a lot of the time especially life and social skills like I would have felt that I was working very much in isolation. Because if you're talking about staff who now are terrific staff now and very highly motivated, very open and becoming more so. But at the same time, a lot of them would have no

¹⁷ It appears that there was a shift from this position.

experience whatsoever of this kind of area that I'm involved in and it would be kind of very threatening to them you know. So like a lot of the time, not so much now but especially in the earlier days I felt I would have been going against their way of working. Like, for example, assertiveness is one very clear example, of teaching kids to be assertive. Now obviously when they are practising they get it wrong sometimes and it comes out that they're 'being cheeky' and so on. Even though I would have explained to staff what I was about and all that they found it hard to take you know, that 'you are teaching them to be cheeky' and this kind of thing you know. This happens less now but it's still a problem. The whole area of staff training has to be addressed" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Dublin area).

4.4 Transferring the Training / Implementing the Programme in the Youthreach Setting

A positive outcome for the *Copping On* Programme is that many Youthreach centres have utilised the materials. This has been influenced by the capacity of the centre to run the programme, whether existing life and social skills programmes are in place and whether there is a supportive environment for staff to transfer learning from in-service training. Interviews were conducted with those who were planning but who had not yet used the pack with a group of young people. A key consideration amongst those planning to implement the materials was the resource implications: whether they had teaching staff and appropriate space. There was a strong sense from the individual interviews that careful consideration was being given to this by the Youthreach staff. For some informants, it was seen as a difficult programme to implement and that this had to do with having the right skills:

"It's a difficult teaching exercise. You need to have a balance between making them aware and not coming down too hard on them" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, rural area).

Overall there was a strong desire expressed by those who had completed the training programme to use the materials in their own settings. There were reasons for not doing this and they typically had little to do with either the training programme or the resource materials but with pre-existing and ongoing difficulties experienced within Youthreach (see appendix 2). For those who had not used the materials or started planning to use them the following reasons were cited for not implementing the *Copping On* programme:

- "staff members would not be comfortable with the non-workshop skills" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Rural Area);

- "we need a comfortable space. I would have to do it with a group of 3 or 4 but I can't even have one-to-one as I have no privacy" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Rural Area);
- "space: we have three instructors using one room and this makes time-tabling another problem" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Dublin);
- "we need a counsellor [to deal with some of the issues which come up] but as we can only offer a few hours a week they get a better offer and move on. You can't build up any expertise in working with this client group" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Dublin);
- "the rooms are not sound-proofed" (Youthreach Co-ordinator, Dublin);
- "I would like to discuss this [implementation] with staff but [it is] down to [my] Co-ordinator to do this" (staff member, urban area).

5. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

5.1 Delivery on Objectives

The *Copping On* Steering Committee delivered on all of the objectives it set for itself in developing the programme from a local to national context, as discussed in section three of this report.

5.2 The Inter-Agency Dimension

The *Copping On* programme was conceived as an inter-agency and inter-departmental initiative and this has worked well for the promoters in delivering on the objectives. An indicator of the strength of this is the work which has been done to bring forward a development plan for the current year involving a wider range of actors.

5.3 The 'Ground-Up' Dimension

Copping On was developed as a response to a need expressed by staff in centres. The development of the programme in 1996 and 1997 was an effective response to that need. The agencies involved have demonstrated responsiveness and efficiency in acting upon the need.

5.4 Stimulating Practice

Even though this report highlights some unresolved issues in relation to the implementation of the *Copping On* initiative, the intention of those who designed the initiative as a means of re-invigorating practice at Youthreach centre level has been realised to a considerable extent. This is demonstrated by the extent to which those trained have utilised programme materials in their setting, as outlined in table 2, section 3 below, and clearly shown in the numbers taking up the training programme.

5.5 The Programme Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator of the *Copping On* initiative has worked over and above what was envisaged. Moreover she has worked in relative isolation. The energy and commitment of the Co-ordinator is acknowledged in this report.

5.6 Programme Aims

The central value of the *Copping On* Programme for young people is its ability to engage them in a process of dialogue between discourses. It enables them to develop their critique of the judicial system. This is in keeping with the central objectives of

Youthreach which emphasise exploration and the development of new skills and competencies.

Whether the Programme has any effect on reducing risk of offending or reducing harmful behaviours, or reducing the incidence of actual offending is a matter for further research and evaluation.

The aim of improving young people - police relations is more complex than the Copping Programme promoters are allowing for. The improvement of relationships between young people and the JLO is valuable for young people in specific situations. This is not the same as an overall or aggregate shift in young people's attitudes towards Gardai in general.

5.7 Programme Focus

There is a slight lack of clarity in relation to whom the programme is targeted at. Interviews with some Youthreach personnel revealed that they seem to be unclear about deciding whom to target or what group to select. A question remains for some of those who undertook the training - is the programme specifically targeted at offenders or more generally at all trainees? . Such considerations are vital where staff need to avoid working on false assumptions which could result in stigmatisation or disruption within the centre. It appears that some centres opted, for whatever reason, to deal with this problem by applying the programme with all trainees.

5.8 Structural Issues in Youthreach

It has been rightly assumed that the Youthreach centre does provide a safe and secure setting for self exploration by young people in relation to crime and offending. It is not safe to assume that programmes such as *Copping On* can be easily integrated within the Youthreach programme. This has to do with unresolved structural issues in Youthreach (as identified in previous evaluations (ESF Evaluation Unit, op.cit.)) in relation to physical space available, the temporary nature of staffing and issues in relation to the need for an ongoing programme of staff training and development (see also appendix 2).

5.9 *Copping On* as Awareness of Consequences

The programme, from a young person's perspective, has been very effective in letting them know about the consequences of their actions. Youthreach participants speak very positively about what they get out of the exercises and information sessions. This success has been achieved by carefully selecting group exercises and adapting them to the needs of typical Youthreach participants. The giving of information or facts in this

context has been crucial in helping young people to critically reflect on their situation. However, there could be a tendency to raise awareness of or expose contradictions in the young people's experiences with educational and judicial institutions.

5.10 The Resource Pack

This was seen as being of great benefit to Youthreach staff in that previously they would have had to adapt exercises from other lifeskills programmes which may not have been culturally appropriate. This amounts to a positive outcome in terms of time saved in preparing materials. The pack was also seen by those interviewed as promoting flexibility in how it is implemented.

5.11 Juvenile Liaison Officer Involvement

There is a varied pattern across the country in terms of both the extent and type of involvement which JLOs have in utilising Programme materials. While it is not possible to overgeneralise, it would appear that those who get most involved, i.e. those who are co-planners and co-facilitators with Youthreach staff, are those who are either experienced with group work from previous practice or training, or are those who have to deal with a relatively small area. *Copping On* seems to provide a tremendous opportunity for JLOs to work with young people in a lifeskills framework. In general however, there is a tendency for JLOs to undertake the giving of information about the law and judicial process, which because of its factual nature, could be given by anybody with basic legal knowledge.

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6. DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES

6.1 Implementation and Transference

The *Copping On* promoters and the Programme Co-ordinator have been successful in developing an innovative response to the needs of Youthreach centres to deal with the issue of offending. They have delivered upon their objectives in devising and developing the resource materials, in organising and implementing a training programme and in following up the training with a series of workshops to examine implementation issues. However, difficulties experienced by centres in implementing *Copping On* are related to unresolved issues within Youthreach. These largely have to do with structural matters such as the human resources question and with the lack of other relevant resources - either teaching hours or suitable physical space for operating lifeskills programmes. As identified by the ESF Evaluation Unit Report, it is also the case that the extent to which a programme like this is implemented depends upon the vision and commitment of the staff. Support of 'workshop staff' has been raised as a critical issue within both interviews and the review meetings. This underlines the significance of staff training issues as identified by the ESF Unit's evaluation report.

The *Copping On* programme has been a focus for furthering the need to link centres together on matters of common concern and has been a means of taking up local innovation and applying it on a national basis. Thus *Copping On* has been a means for dealing with earlier criticisms of Youthreach in relation to creating a 'sense of programme' (see ESF Evaluation Unit Report). Moreover, the *Copping On* experience has further underlined the status of the Youthreach programme as a residual dimension within the educational system. At the same time, it has provided a glimpse of what the programme might be like with additional programme development supports.

6.2 The Implications for Juvenile Liaison Officers

For the JLOs, the *Copping On* initiative has been very positively received. It typically has the effect of heightening enthusiasm amongst JLOs to work with young people in a different way. This is then counterbalanced by the realisation that working with young people in a lifeskills or group situation requires a broader set of skills than might appear to be required on first contact with the programme. There seems to be only a small number of cases where the JLO is an active participant on an equal basis in the group process. As discussed in section 4.2 below, the level of involvement across the country seems to vary depending upon factors such as the group skills of the individual Garda, the negotiation skills and process undertaken to enter the group, and his / her availability to give sufficient time to process oriented work such as group development.

If there is a tendency implied in the interviews conducted for this review, it is that JLOs are more comfortable with formal or didactic situations and as a result tend more toward being the providers of factual information within the programme. Some are satisfied with this level of involvement, others want to be included as partners in the planning and implementation. Some JLOs interviewed for this review expressed frustration at not being able to participate and not being easily accepted by groups of young people. This could be overcome with the appropriate skills and with a clear sense that entry to lifeskills groups within the Youthreach or other setting has to be negotiated and maintained through the consent of the participants.

The *Copping On* programme reveals the promise of new methods of working for the Garda JLOs and at the same time highlights the gaps in experience and training. If JLOs are to shift out of the current method of dealing with individual cases it would have significant implications for training resources and overall operational matters. In relation to training it would probably involve the inclusion of a groupwork skills module within the Garda JLO training programme. Such a module could easily be subcontracted to an agency or educational institution specialising in this area but would have the implication of expanding the current initial training programme. Equally, this might be achieved by broadening the in-service programme. An alternative strategy which could be adopted is to upskill existing JLO staff as groupwork / life and social skills trainers.

Consultations with JLOs for this review revealed that in some areas they were not in a position to provide the time necessary to devote to personal development programmes.

6.3 Issues in Relation to Mainstreaming the Programme

In general, *Copping On* has provided a focus for inter-agency co-operation and has been an innovative project in developing an educational response to youth crime and offending. From this point of view it has been a fruitful partnership between the agencies involved who have demonstrated the ability to deliver on objectives. It does indicate a way forward for collaboration between educational and justice agencies which the framework in the SMI seems to encourage. The experience of *Copping On* seems to point in the direction of intensifying such collaboration and broadening it to include other agencies including those in the health and training sectors. It might also be pertinent to consider the possible role which might be played by the Combat Poverty Agency given that the client group is especially marginalised and that most of them reside within designated disadvantaged areas. This may serve as a means of closely integrating polices in relation to crime prevention and crime awareness within the framework of the National Anti Poverty Strategy. Moreover, there is the potential here

for broadening the lifeskills dimension to include an analysis of poverty related issues such as that within the Fair Shares Programme as developed by the Combat Poverty Agency.

This could open the way for broadening the 'crime awareness' agenda by exploring and piloting other innovative projects and conducting further research in this area.

The lifeskills programme is written in such a generic way as to have a wide applicability. There is also perhaps a need to identify the precise outcome sought in such programmes given that there is little broad evidence that they have any crime prevention impact or that they prevent actual offending. There can be no doubt that the resource materials when applied can create crime awareness by helping young people to comprehend and reflect about themselves in relation to formal and indigenous discourses (see section 4.2) but whether this translates into actual prevention of crime is unknown.

6.4 Partnership Approaches

The Steering Committee has begun the process of adopting a partnership approach to implementing the lifeskills programme at local level. The initial work in the first twelve months has operated under the auspices of two Government departments and some related agencies. In adopting a partnership approach it is now operating in an entirely new framework for underpinning programme delivery at the local level. Youthreach staff have a range of experience levels with partnership approaches¹⁸. It is crucial to consider the position of Youthreach staff in this regard and their relative isolation in the community from broader local development. While some Youthreach centres have been adept at developing links, others are hardly aware of or active in community development and local development networks. Equally, some Youthreach centres are notable for their energy and commitment to partnership approaches. Again, this issue underlines the position of Youthreach within the education system and the transient nature of staffing and the need for human resources investment in this sector.

6.5 Resource and Staffing Implications of Expanding *Copping On*

The programme has been staffed on a part-time basis. It must be acknowledged that considerable development work has been undertaken in the past fifteen months on this basis. Expanding the programme beyond Youthreach will have resource implications. It is clear, as suggested in 6.1 above, that the work in integrating *Copping On* within Youthreach is not yet finished.

¹⁸ At review meetings, some Youthreach staff displayed a reticence towards this way of working.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Implementing Programme Developments

This report highlights the weakness in the development framework within which the *Copping On* Programme has been developed. Steps have been taken towards providing regionally based technical and programme supports to Youthreach centres. It is crucial that this is put in place as a means of stimulating and promoting the development of innovation in and between Youthreach centres. The provision of ongoing development support on a regional basis must also take account of the need for Youthreach to be linked horizontally with agencies at local level and there should be an emphasis on promoting an organisational culture which holds as central the need for networking. There is an ongoing issue in relation to the relative position of staffing and staff development in Youthreach which needs to be addressed for programmes such as *Copping On* to have any impact or value in the longer term.

7.2 JLO Training

The need for consideration of the position of JLOs is highlighted in 6.2 below. Their *Copping On* experiences have provided a promising glimpse of a different and new way of working. Their own capacity to intensify their involvement limits the extent of their participation. In order to develop the crime prevention role of JLOs the Garda Síochána could invest in an applied lifeskills training programme including group work training which would be available to those wishing use it as a method of working with young people. Such a programme could be developed initially on a pilot basis and the results closely monitored by a relevant evaluation / research agency.

A block to involvement of JLOs in some areas has been their relative lack of availability to devote time to *Copping On*. This could be overcome by involving other Gardai who might be keen to work in this way, especially those officers involved in community policing.

7.3 Crime Awareness and Prevention as a Multidimensional Issue

The *Copping On* Programme has embodied the spirit of the SMI by recognising the complexity of crime and that potential strategies for tackling it must be developed within an inter-agency context. Working in partnership is a difficult and trying process where agencies are constantly challenged to work on their relationship with others. As such this way of working uses up resources at local and national level. In order to develop this component of the work of *Copping On*, it is crucial that there be some investment in capacity building measures to promote inter-agency collaboration. This could

initially take the form of further training at regional level. The recent expansion of the Steering Committee to include the Youth Affairs Section and the Psychological Service of the Department of Education and Science is a critical addition to developing the Programme's structure at national level.

7.4 Mainstreaming the Programme

The key benefit of a non-mainstreamed programme is that it has the capacity to be deployed flexibly based upon group needs and to be utilised with the most marginal group within the educational system. A key finding of this review is that the resource materials are seen by users as being adaptable and flexible and as such the programme has a wide applicability to other settings where group work with young people features - especially youth projects, training workshops and within the youth service generally. Assuming that mainstreaming in this context, means applying *Copping On* in formal settings there are only two issues from the literature on drug prevention in schools which would seem to advise against this. First, Morgan et al (1996) have suggested that one of the greatest difficulties in implementing such resource materials has to do with *curriculum overload*. Second, Dorn and Murji (1992) suggest that there are unintended side effects of introducing drug prevention programmes in school settings related to overload. For instance, increased demands on teaching time led to a drop in learning standards in the DARE programme in the United States (1992: 22). This could have similar implications in structured educational or training settings. Further piloting of the resource materials in a variety of formal and informal settings is recommended. It might well be more efficient, in the light of the two issues mentioned above, to incorporate a crime awareness module within existing health and social education programmes rather than adding to overload by placing another pack of resource materials in circulation.

7.5 *Copping On* Staffing

The demands placed upon the Programme Co-ordinator has been so great that it has been inevitable that she has worked beyond the allocation of employment hours. In addition it is inevitable that the experience of working in isolation had a negative personal impact on the Co-ordinator. In expanding the Programme to deal with Youthreach and other settings, it is crucial that the training functions be devolved to regionally based trainers with overall support and direction provided by the Co-ordinator. This would mean that the Co-ordinator would play a more strategic role in programme development. It is recommended that the post of Co-ordinator be considered as a full-time equivalent post.

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APPENDIX 1: THE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTRE, TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

The Centre was jointly established in 1995 by the Departments of Psychology and Social Studies. It has two academic directors, a programme director, research officer and three research staff. The Centre's research programme is built around three themes: children in a changing Ireland; children in disadvantaged communities; children, the law and public policies. To date the Centre's main research activities include: study on the social and psychological needs of children of drug users; study on the factors that contribute to risk and to protection from drug use in a community with multiple social risks; evaluation studies on projects responding to children who are at-risk of early school leaving; studies on measures for more effectively integrating services to children in disadvantaged communities. In October 1997 the Centre began a wider review of community programmes for diverting young people from crime. This research is reviewing models of intervention in this jurisdiction and elsewhere and is aimed at identifying models of good practice. This research project is being advised by a working party chaired by Dr. Sheila Greene, academic co-director at the Centre.

APPENDIX 2: EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS PROVISION: A SUMMARY OF POINTS FROM THE EVALUATION REPORT, ESF EVALUATION UNIT (1996).

In order to clarify the setting in which the *Copping On* programme has developed, it is necessary to draw upon a number of pertinent issues identified in the Evaluation Report on Early School Leavers Provision undertaken by the ESF Evaluation Unit.

First, the Youthreach programme, the report suggests, has been 'non-prescriptive' or a 'non-programme' given that since its development, it lacked clear and precise programme goals at national level and as it is implemented through two institutional mechanisms (education and training systems) it is tantamount to operating two programmes (ESF Evaluation Unit, 1996: 127-128).

Second, Youthreach has been conceived as a 'temporary solution to a temporary problem' at official level. The ESF Evaluation Unit report suggests that an indicator of this is the absence of capital expenditure programme for early school leaver provision and that as such Youthreach centres are typically housed in accommodation in which there is no security of tenure (1996: 131).

Third, ESF Evaluation Unit report suggests that young people leave school because it is unsuited to their social, economic and cultural reality. In essence, 'they cannot handle school and schools cannot handle them' and that the balance of blame is on the young people who are branded as failures. (1996: 134).

Fourth, the absence of a programmed approach has led to a variety of models being adopted in centres. On a positive note, this encourages local innovation and allows staff to work creatively within a local, but the report suggests, it 'disguises some of the systemic deficiencies' (1996: 136). As such, the authors suggest it is a form of 'dependent' provision.

The authors point out:

It is not clear that there is a long term commitment to the programme and it is evident that it does not meet the level of demand that exists. It is also unclear as to where Youthreach fits into the broader picture. Levels of literacy / numeracy and counselling / guidance supports are inadequate. The emphasis of the programme from site to site differs and it is not clear that there is a general understanding as to what is intended for Youthreach graduates apart from whatever options are permitted by dint of practice in their local CTW or Youthreach Centre (1996: 138).

Fifth, the report suggests, most staff are in need of ongoing training towards a qualification which has currency within the education and training system. The report acknowledges that the activity of the National Co-ordinator has gone some way to address this through skills audits, exchange workshops and networking.

Sixth, there are no standard terms and conditions for staff who are presumably working within a national programme. This is in part a factor caused by the residual nature of provision but also that because they are unqualified they are themselves victims of a credentialist based labour market in training and education terms, every bit as much as their clients:

It is possible to discern the culture of credentialism working against Youthreach personnel in much the same way as it works against their clientele. There are many similarities between the circumstances of the two groups. Both are forced to operate in an environment that is relatively unstructured, at least beyond their own immediate centre / milieu. From the point of view of the Youthreach personnel, there is no available career progression path, there is relatively limited scope for improving one's level of qualification (1996: 160).

Thus, while acknowledging the energy and spirit of staff in the Programme, the ESF Evaluation Unit Repon is highly critical of Youthreach at a structural level. In sum. it is a form of dependent or residual provision. It has been operated on the assumption that early school leaving is a temporary phenomenon or that it is socially problematic in a closed labour market context where options for mobility are restricted.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF THE JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAMME / JUVENILE LIAISON OFFICER SCHEME OPERATED BY THE GARDA SIOCHANA.

The programme is an alternative to prosecution. Juveniles may be cautioned provided that (the offender):

- is under 18 years of age;
- admits the offence;
- has not been cautioned previously or having been cautioned, the circumstances are such that it would be deemed appropriate to administer a further caution;
- parents [of the offender] / guardian agree to co-operate with the Gardai by accepting any help or advice about the juvenile's future or in the circumstances pertaining to the particular case, where the parents / guardian fail to co-operate, the juvenile deserves the opportunity of availing of the benefits of the scheme (Garda National Juvenile Office).

Cautions are either formal or informal. The latter applies to cases of minor crimes and summary offences and is given to the offenders normally at the young persons home in the presence of parents or guardian. The Formal Caution applies in cases of serious offences or if the person has previously been informally cautioned. This is given by the Superintendent for the area where the young person resides and is given in the presence of parents at the Garda Station. A file on an offence is given to the JLO to study and make enquires which means visiting the person's home and school (or Youthreach centre). Formal Cautions involve the offender being supervised by the JLO in the community and involves "contact" with him or her in their own setting:

Each Juvenile Liaison Officer meets and co-operates with teachers, parents, probation officers, social workers, welfare officers, child guidance clinics, public health clinics, the Courts, and indeed all voluntary and statutory bodies. By establishing contact with these people, the JLO is in a better position to assist juvenile offenders and their families and to help and guide juveniles in his area away from a life of crime (Source: Garda National Juvenile Office Leaflet).